

Sixth Re-Zoning Meeting

Location: Vine Magnet

Date: 1-31-2017

Attendance: 250 +

Comments from Community:

- David commented that the Vine Magnet capacity was 600 while enrollment is only at 349. He asked, "If we are building community schools, why could we not build one on the East side of town?" He also stated that it did not make sense to bus kids across town at 5:30-6 a.m.
- Another community member stated that KCS "preaches" about community schools, but questions how we can make that claim since we are busing kids out of their community. People in that community chose to live there, because they wanted to, not because they had to. Parent was also concerned that students who were bused outside of their communities could not participate in after school activities.
- Marshal Walker grew up in the era of segregation. He stated that rezoning started in 1999 with Sarah Moore Greene and we were still in the process.
- Chris Battle, pastor, commented that students living in walking distance from their schools should be allowed to stay in their zone. He also volunteered to be part of the zoning committee. Rev. Battle also suggested that we build a smaller school for Gibbs and add on as the student population increases. Kids from Vine are currently being bused to South Doyle Middle, putting "neighbors against neighbors" in sports and extracurricular activities.
- Mr. Anderson spoke about KCS boundaries and the guidelines used to set school zones. He commented that a river, to him, was a pretty significant boundary. He also stated that it was not the Vine community's fault that South Doyle was not full. He also asked that we make the Vine Magnet zone larger.
- Parent believes in community schools and would like to see their children brought back to Vine from South Doyle Middle.

- Parent of children attending both Vine and Austin East schools asked if there was a benefit for Vine students, regarding two new middle schools being built in Knox County. She said that if there was not, then to please leave their community out of it.
- Sam McKenzie, former County Commissioner, commended the parents in the Gibbs Community for getting their own community school. He asked what the tenets were for getting a new school going forward, and if having a school within a community is now one of the requirements for getting a new school built. He asked if we were considering not populating Gibbs to capacity.
- Otis Little John asked that we “remember the kids.” Time is critical and getting up at 5 a.m. and returning home at 7 p.m. is difficult on students and lessens their chances for continuing to the next level of education.
- Another community member asked about building a new Vine School on a vacant lot nearby. She felt that students needed to be taught by someone from their own neighborhood.
- Michael Moore was raised in the area. He asked what percentage of whites, blacks and Hispanics were currently being bused at this time. Also, he wanted to know how late buses arrived home.
- Pastor from New Salem Baptist Church spoke about the area from Boyd’s Bridge to Carter. He stated that half of the students were bused to South Doyle and half to Carter; all of these students should be at Vine. Gibbs Middle does not make sense to him.
- Community member brought up “I-Zones” and his concept of how in his opinion was bad for schools. *(Superintendent Buzz Thomas asked three Principals of I-Zone Schools to clear any misinterpretation that the crowd may have, and how this was a tool used to help our schools, not shut their doors.)*
- Community member brought up the reason that the former Gibbs Middle was closed; being due to an OCR complaint. She also questioned what BEP money was, and if we got more money from the state for busing students out of low income areas.
- Breanna Holloway has four students in KCS. She stated that in Knoxville, when you combine both city and county there is only a 12 percent black population. With those numbers, she feels it is almost impossible to avoid

racial disparities. She also was concerned that Mechanicsville was being overlooked. She lives within walking distance to Maynard and her kids are being bused to Bearden. She asked what they could do as a community to get a new middle and high school.

- Cecilia Henderson was concerned that although KCS was hearing the community's comments; they were not going to do anything about it. She stated that this was no longer acceptable and the community would not allow it.
- Mr. Clark encouraged other community members to continue showing up for future re-zoning meetings, County Commission and School Board meetings.
- Lewis Logan wanted reassurance that KCS would not bus anymore students from their community and that they would get a new school built.
- Carla, a former teacher who lives in the Holston area, asked that we not bus students who live in one community to another community.
- Community member asked about a school being built in the Vine area. She stated that they had plenty of land available for use.
- Mr. Nelson felt that busing students had broken his community.
- Rev. Larry Branson said that his community had been torn apart his entire life by busing. He felt that students in his community received second-hand books, hand-me-down computers, scared teachers and a less overall quality education. He stated, "We love our children and want both a quality and quantity education for them." He also asked that funding come back to their schools.
- Francis White-Hall received a "good" education at Vine and Austin East. She commented that the community should not have to "beg" for what is supposed to be rightfully theirs. Rezoning was another way of diluting schools and community.
- Community member commented that they were not going to be silent anymore. All East schools needed improvement and fixed.
- Leonard Campbell spoke about the need of community schools and how that closing them really striped away a sense of community.

- A college professor from Pellissippi Community College spoke of graduating from Austin East and how he chose to live in East Knoxville. He encouraged other community members to attend Board meetings and be pro-active.
- Mrs. Butler stated that she had attended every school rezoning meeting. She was grateful to get the opportunity to voice her concerns. She asked that the community “hold the ones accountable that cast their vote for the new middle schools.” She asked that they come talk to the community themselves. She felt kids in their community deserved better.
- Zimbaya announced that there would be a follow up meeting for interested community members on Saturday, Feb. 11, at 10:30 a.m. He spoke about segregated schools and that since 1954 this practice was no longer tolerated by the Supreme Court.
- Patrice Deathridge, a teacher at Vine, talked about the community being divided because of rezoning. Students no longer have friends right across the street, because neighbors are bused to different schools. She wanted to see neighborhoods stay together and a bigger zone for Vine.
- Ashanti Baily wanted to challenge Board Members and KCS presenter to have more answers when they held these meetings with the public.
- Nancy Mott was the grandmother of four African American students. She felt that being white or black should not matter and that we needed to take responsibility to ensure that all students received a quality education.
- Mr. Langlois, principal at Austin East, stated that his school was NOT a failing school. “We perpetuate our own lies.” He asked the community to not spread rumors. He stated that Austin East is a very successful high school, and he encouraged others to share that when they left the meeting. “Believe in them! We do have white kids and we do recruit. This needs to stop.”
- Christy Mitchell has been a teacher for 18 years. She is very proud of Holston Middle. When she began teaching, they had approx. 300 students and now have close to 800. She felt that rezoning was similar to a divorce. She asked that KCS do what was best for all students. She would like to see all kids have equitable resources.
- Rick, a community member, encouraged others to attend MPC meetings. He said that plans for schools were set 10-20 years in advance and that

they needed to be proactive now for the future. “Take a school out of a community and it denigrates the community.”

- Katrina Chesney said that 17-18 buses operated daily at Carter. The school is overcrowded and they do not have enough lockers. She also stated that it was hard to have parent-teacher conferences when you do not live close by the school.
- Superintendent Buzz Thomas promised a proposal for the new rezoning to the community by the end of February.